

Section 6

Community Goals

6 - COMMUNITY GOALS

A. Description of Process

Arlington's open space and recreational goals for the community are derived from the open space and recreational needs and desires of the Town's many constituencies. For this Plan, the Open Space Committee reviewed all previous goals and actions and prepared an extensive list of accomplishments, incorporating feedback and reports from many individuals and organizations. The progress made by the Town over the past five years serves to demonstrate and reinforce its commitment to these goals.

The 1996 Plan and this current Plan for 2002-2007 accept and support two overarching community goals (Environment and Culture and Recreation) of Arlington's Vision 2020, which Town Meeting has adopted and which Town decision-making bodies must consider in their policymaking. Furthermore, because Arlington's Vision 2020 has won numerous awards for its community planning and is composed of elected and appointed Town officials and community members, the committee believes Vision 2020 goals best represent Arlington's community and its commitment to open space and recreation issues.

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Community Goals

Adopted from Arlington's Vision 2020 and the Town's bylaws, the following two statements now also serve as Arlington's open space and recreation community goals:

1. *Environment:* We value the physical beauty and natural habitats of our Town — parks, ponds, and wetlands, dramatic vistas and tree-lined streets — as they contribute to the well being of our community. Recognizing the fragility of our natural resources, we must ensure that Arlington's residential areas, commercial centers and infrastructure are developed in harmony with environmental concerns. We will be known for our commitment to the preservation of Arlington's beauty, limited open space and resources, as well as our place in the regional and global community.

2. *Culture and Recreation:* We value the many opportunities to meet, play, and grow in Arlington while treasuring and preserving our unique historical resources. Our social, cultural, artistic, historic, athletic, recreational, and other community groups strengthen Town life. We will be known for the breadth and richness of our resources and activities available to Arlington citizens.

The fulfillment of the above community goals will make Arlington a more desirable and pleasant Town to live in and visit. Further, by bringing these community goals to fruition, Arlington's community may acquire a greater sense of awareness of and appreciation for the Town's open space.

Section 7

Analysis of Needs

7 - ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The Open Space Committee generated this Analysis of Needs by reviewing the January 1995 Open Space Survey results, more recent surveys conducted by Vision 2020 and the OSC, and other research into Arlington's resource, community and management needs. This analysis summarizes the major open space issues and concerns facing the Town in 2002 and in the future.

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

The Open Space Committee continues to address the following five general areas of concern as outlined in the 1996 Plan:

- Regional resource protection needs
- Historical resource protection needs
- Water resource protection needs
- Fisheries and wildlife protection needs
- Vegetation protection needs.

It is understood that these areas of need have broad overlap; however, the OSC presents each specific resource protection need under the area of concern in which it best fits.

Regional Resource Protection Needs

Successful implementation of a good open space plan for Arlington requires the cooperation of nearby communities and resource-oriented organizations in the region. The Town's specific regional resource protection needs include the following:

- A regional natural resources review is required to protect virtually all of Arlington's natural open spaces. Examination of their total ecological requirements and the effects of local perturbations on the health of regional resources is an ongoing need. Four recently proposed developments in the vicinity of Alewife Reservation in East Arlington offer an example of why regional coordination is so important. The combined development of the Mugar site, Belmont Uplands, Cambridge Storm Drain enhancement and modification of the Arthur D. Little property would seriously impact the fragile ecology and flooding problems in that region, which involves the towns of Arlington and Belmont and the city of Cambridge.
- Additional networking and regional planning are needed to maximize the design, use and maintenance of regional recreational resources, such as bicycle and pedestrian paths, aquatic and terrestrial wildlife corridors, and historical sites, especially relating to the Revolutionary War.
- The annual spring migrations of the Alewife and Blueback Herring (via the Mystic River, Alewife Brook, and Mill Brook) that spawn in Little Pond and the Mystic Lakes have decreased significantly since colonial times. Only wide-scale cooperation between communities, towns, and state agencies can mitigate the physical barriers that now exist. Substantial reduction of water pollution in Boston Harbor and throughout the Mystic River region and its tributaries will also be necessary before we can renew the migrations of pollution-sensitive fishes.

- Many of the historical sites in Arlington (together with their associated open space) reveal their full significance only when presented in the context of their relationship to historical sites in other communities. For example, the open space around the Jason Russell House derives much of its significance from the regional battle fought there in April 1775. Arlington could best present the significance of this battle if all the communities along the Revolutionary War battle route from Boston to Concord coordinate their presentations of this historic story. Further, Arlington needs a better connection to the Minuteman National Historic Park so that the Town can fully avail itself of all potential assistance and guidance the National Park Services may offer. Arlington is included in the National Park Services interpretive mandate for the Minuteman National Historic Park.

Historical Resource Protection Needs

Arlington citizens have shown a renewed respect and reverence for the Town's historical facilities and spaces. This attitude is most obviously displayed through the major investment in renovations and relandscaping by the Town in the central historic "civic block." This work has included renovations to the interior of Town Hall, restoration of the Cyrus Dallin Flag Pole and sculpture next to Town Hall, restoration of the Dallin "Menotomy Indian Hunter" sculpture, reflecting pool and gardens in the Winfield Robbins Memorial Gardens, renovation and expansion of the Robbins Memorial Library, and renovation of the Whittemore Robbins House.

To continue the protection of these historic and related open space resources, the Town needs to implement the final phases of the relandscaping and restoration plans for the Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden and develop a management plan for maintenance of those gardens and the gardens around the Whittemore Robbins House.

Another historically significant area needing attention is Cooke's Hollow along Mill Brook near Mystic Street.

Some other resource protection needs that relate to Arlington's historical roots are as follows:

- During the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, more than half of Arlington's land area was devoted to vegetable farming. Private and community vegetable gardens are still popular; however, this gardening tradition is in need of revitalization and expansion as the Town considers alternative uses of open space.
- Arlington needs to investigate, preserve, and protect sites of historical significance. For example, during the end of the nineteenth century, one of Arlington's social centers was the Boat House at the foot of Spring Valley on Spy Pond. Its building and pier burned down in 1904. Also, in 1775, one of the secret powder houses sought by the British troops had been located on this same site. Although the area is now mostly privately owned, it is still open space and provides an excellent "window" on Spy Pond; a simple plaque or marker could identify the historical significance of the area.
- Arlington needs to engage the National Park Service in more projects that would protect and enhance Arlington's heritage. As mentioned, the National Park Services includes Arlington in its interpretative mandate for the Minuteman National Historic Park. A stronger affiliation with the National Park Service is also a recommendation of the Arlington Business Community Study, which the Arlington Redevelopment Board released in December 1995.

- Arlington also needs to strengthen its relationship with Massachusetts Historic Commission and Historic Massachusetts, two state agencies that focus on historic sites and properties.

Water Resource Protection Needs

All of the water bodies in Arlington face the threat of non-point pollution within their contributing watersheds due to runoff from roadways, houses and businesses, accelerating the process of eutrophication. In particular, the following water bodies face specific problems:

- Spy Pond receives runoff from Route 2 and the surrounding area via more than 40 storm drains. Through a Lake and Pond Watershed Restoration grant from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) for the period 2001-2004, the undesirable aquatic weeds that thrive in the pond are being treated to restore the pond to recreational usability.
- Arlington Reservoir faces non-point pollution problems from pesticides and fertilizers from a nearby farm and surrounding homes. The major aquatic weed problem in the Reservoir is the water chestnut, which colonizes in shallow zones. It is being controlled by harvesting during the summer. Reservoir management is sometimes difficult because the Reservoir is located in both Arlington and Lexington. A joint management plan would allow for more effective monitoring of the Reservoir. In addition, the earthen dam around the Arlington side of the Reservoir is under study because of concerns about its stability. Major engineering and vegetation changes may be required by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management.
- The Mystic Lakes have suffered from the non-point runoff from the Mystic Valley Parkway and lawn and yard maintenance. Aquatic weeds such as milfoil have proven both a hazard to human safety and a contribution to the eutrophication of the water body. The Mystic Boat Club in Winchester has successfully applied aquatic pesticides to control the weed problem in their area of the Mystic Lake.
- Mill Brook runs the length of the Town (starting at the Reservoir and ending at the Lower Mystic Lake) and faces pollution assaults all along its route via non-point sources and storm drains. Culverting and physical barriers have made Mill Brook, especially upstream of Cooke's Hollow, less habitable to fish and native aquatic mammals than in previous years.
- Alewife Brook has approximately 12 active combined sewer overflows along its shores. Much of this sewer water comes from Somerville, through Cambridge. Currently, a regional committee is studying this problem.
- Hill's Pond, originally created to feed Farmer Hill's cows, is a scenic pond in Menotomy Rocks Park that supports fish. The Friends of Menotomy Rock Park played a part in helping the Town drain, dredge and redesign the pond in the mid-1990s. The project won an award for technical merit from the North American Lakes Management Society. The Town should continue to follow recommended management guidelines to ensure a viable pond ecosystem.

Fisheries and Wildlife Protection Needs

Arlington has breeding, migrating, or wintering populations of invertebrates, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals that require open space. To sustain these populations the Town should, among other things, consider the following:

- Effect of commercial or residential development adjacent to open space
- Effect of an increase in active recreational uses in open space
- Effect of new or increased level of pollution in the Town's waters

Vegetation Protection Needs

- Wetlands — The vegetation in wetlands is in need of protection. For instance, the amount of water in Great Meadows' wetlands is substantially less now than in 1920. Construction of new buildings and streets around the periphery has affected its hydrology. This change in water amount is likely affecting vegetation, although we have no specific vegetation data available from 1920 with which to compare.
- Commercial landscaping — Although the Environmental Design Review zoning bylaw of Arlington includes requirements for landscaping of new commercial developments (discussed in Section 4), no provision exists for protecting wildlife habitat, except through the Wetlands Protection Act. Vegetation is usually selected on the basis of cost, appearance, and durability; there is little regard for the effect on birds and other wildlife native to the area.
- Native vegetation is losing ground to invasive, exotic species, both in wetlands (e.g., *Phragmites* and *Lythrum Salicari* invasions) and uplands (e.g. *Polygonum eupspidatum*). Environmentally safe and appropriate noxious weed control efforts are badly needed on a townwide level.

B. Summary of Community Needs

The Open Space Committee generated the following community needs analysis from:

- Park and Recreation Commission Report (April 2001)
- Review of community feedback on various surveys and through ongoing meetings and reports
- Analysis of accomplishments since publication of the Arlington 1996 Open Space Plan (See Section 2)
- Analysis of Sections 2 through 5 of this 2002 - 2007 Plan

Natural Open Space Needs

Surveys conducted by the Open Space Committee and Vision 2020 in 2000 and 2001 indicate strong interest in natural open space areas for passive recreation, including walking, bird watching and quiet contemplation (See Appendix B). These needs for peaceful public places to walk and relax are currently met only at such areas as Menotomy Rocks Park, the path around the Arlington Reservoir, in Arlington's Great Meadows in Lexington, and in some areas around Spy Pond. The Mugar site, Symmes property and Reed's Brook offer hope for additional such conservation and passive recreation spaces in the future.

Park and Recreation Needs

The same surveys noted above indicate important needs and concerns about active outdoor recreational facilities. According to the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC), many of Arlington's 17 playing fields are not designated for single sport use. During the busy spring, summer and fall sports seasons, most of these fields are in constant use. Sports participation has increased in recent years, which creates further field availability and maintenance problems. For example, Arlington's Soccer Club program has now serves over 1,400 children. The addition of youth lacrosse has also increased demand for the soccer/utility fields. See Appendix P for PRC 10-year plans for the past several years.

Arlington's Playing Fields

As a result of Arlington's limited field space and increased youth and adult participation in recreational sports, most playing fields are heavily used throughout the year. The Park and Recreation Commission regularly documents the number of Arlington's playing fields and the number of sports teams that play on those fields.

The Park and Recreation Commission recommends adding more playing fields to keep up with the demands of Arlington residents. The Commission also indicates the need for field upgrading and better field maintenance so that fields stay in the proper condition for use, thereby saving the time and money otherwise needed for serious field renovation. Additional fields will allow the Commission to periodically rest some fields and reduce overall wear and tear.

Ideal Number of Playing Fields

The Park and Recreation Commission has evaluated the number of playing fields needed and recommends a total of 28 fields. The following narrations, prepared by the Park and Recreation Commission, explain the status and need for additional playing fields:

- **Baseball Fields** — Arlington has a sufficient number of major league baseball fields. All five Major League diamonds are situated in different areas of the Town, and afford maximum formal and informal use. Each field accommodates another sport during the non-baseball season. Three of the baseball fields (North Union, Robbins Farm and W.A. Peirce) are somewhat limited to use by younger players because of their short outfields. PRC recommends that one of these shorter fields be expanded to accommodate older players who need a full-size field.
- **Little League/Softball** — Fourteen fields with 60-foot base paths are scattered throughout Arlington. Softball and Little League fields have somewhat different configurations, as Little League fields have a pitcher's mound and softball fields do not. The Park and Recreation Commission recommends adding two fields, one dedicated to softball and one dedicated to Little League.
- **Soccer (100 yards plus) and Soccer (40 X 60 yards)** — Of the twelve soccer fields, five are located in one area (the Magnolia/Thorndike complex in East Arlington) and cannot be used simultaneously. Soccer is the largest youth sport in Arlington. To keep up with the still-growing demand for soccer fields, PRC recommends adding three more soccer fields located in different parts of Town.

- **Football** — The only football field in Arlington is located at Arlington High School (W.A. Peirce Field). Nine teams (including Arlington High School, Arlington Catholic High School, and Pop Warner teams) use this field. The Park and Recreation Commission estimates that two additional practice fields would allow the one existing field to have some relief from constant use during football season.
- **Field Hockey** — The Park and Recreation Commission manages one field hockey field, which is located in the outfield of the Summer Street baseball field. The Commission estimates that an additional field hockey field could be used for lacrosse and soccer.

Field Development Solutions

- **Reed's Brook** - New field development will include a major league baseball diamond and soccer/utility field. This project should be completed by the end of 2004.
- **Hill's Hill Field** - The redevelopment of Hill's Hill field in 2001 created two additional youth-sized soccer fields (40 x 60 yards).
- **Thorndike Field** - The renovation of Thorndike Field will create an additional full-sized soccer field (100 yard plus) and two youth-sized soccer fields. The renovation will also include removing the existing two adult softball fields. This project will be completed by the end of 2001, but the fields will not be used until June 2002 to ensure their stability.

Department of Public Works' Needs

Arlington's Department of Public Works (DPW) needs work yard space for collecting, storing and distributing certain kinds of materials, such as tree parts and other organic refuse and street sweepings. Former sites next to Meadowbrook Park and the Arlington Reservoir are no longer being used because of their locations near wetlands and wildlife habitats and because of their potential to limit public enjoyment and use of two key parcels of open space. The DPW yard on Grove Street now receives some of this material.

Without appropriate storage and work space for these operations, the DPW cannot make cost effective use of staff and equipment or take advantage of changeable market conditions. These operations may even increase in the future, since a major factor in improving water quality and maintaining healthy habitats in developed, urban areas is more frequent, year-round street sweeping and cleaning of catch basins, which in turn may create problems with contamination of nearby wetlands and water ways.

C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

The main management needs Arlington faces today relate to how the Town manages its open space. In particular, the Town needs to:

- Increase funding and staffing for management, maintenance and upgrading of open spaces
- Create management plans for each major open space and recreational site and provide mechanisms for their implementation

- Empower the Open Space Committee to facilitate, help implement, update and advance the goals of this Open Space Plan.

Town Open Space Management

Most communities in Massachusetts have struggled with fewer revenue dollars since the passage of Proposition 2 1/2, a statewide referendum voted more than 21 years ago that limited the amount of revenue a community could collect through property tax. Arlington is no exception. All public services suffer as communities prioritize their allocation of revenues. Parks, playgrounds, and other open spaces suffer as maintenance dollars are cut and personnel are reduced.

For almost 20 years, until 1992-1993, Park and Recreation Facilities were the responsibility of the Department of Properties and Natural Resources, which was headed by one of seven department heads responsible to the Town Manager. Normal attrition, a hiring freeze, an early retirement program, and a reorganization by management resulted in a consolidation of Public Works, Properties and Natural Resources and Engineering into one department. This departmental consolidation marked an important change in the way the Town managed its open space.

Arlington's new arrangement, while it may increase efficiency, fails to recognize the importance of public properties and open spaces as a separate entity, or a separate deputyship in the current structure. The Town does not have one staff member whose sole duty is maintaining public properties; rather this responsibility is scattered across three departments: Human Services (recreational programming); Public Works (maintenance); and Town Manager (management). There is coordination, however, as both the Human Services and Public Works Directors report to the Town Manager.

Because the Department of Public Works oversees the majority of Arlington's open space, frequently open space budget needs are weighed internally against other departmental needs and do not emerge in public debate as a separate interest.

The best method for giving open space an advocate in Town government is not clear. Clearly, a high level of open space interest and commitment exists on behalf of the citizens who serve on the Open Space committee, Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, and many other special interest and Friends groups. This high level of commitment indicates the potential for citizen support for park, playground and other open space revitalization.

Need for Overall Open Space Management Plan

Arlington needs an overall open space management plan that will make use of existing Town management structure and resources. This management plan will provide a roadmap for those in charge of a particular open space. It will make clear the lines of responsibilities and it will provide a way to implement many of the goals of this Open Space Plan. It is also a tool for increased public support in making our parks and open spaces the best that they can be, and insuring that every part of the Town, and every major segment of the population, gets the most up-to-date and suitable facilities possible.

While relying on the existing Town management and structure, a new overall open space management plan may make recommendations for change. For example, there is a need for open space and recreation interests to be a stronger part of the existing budget process. One way to do this is to generate support for a long-range capital planning budget for open space and recreation facilities, as the Town did years ago. As various Town survey results have indicated, the majority of respondents have said they would support the upgrading of recreation and open space lands. Some of the financing could be arranged through usual government financing mechanisms and some through special programs such as grants or enterprise accounts.

Need for a Management Plan for Each Major Open Space and Recreation Site

In addition to an overall open space management plan, each major open space and recreation site needs an individual management plan, which could include the following information.

Base Information

- Location on Arlington map
- Acreage
- Site map with features and facilities
- Boundaries by deed and boundaries on the ground
- List of significant natural inhabitants — plants and animals
- Site history
- Evaluation of handicapped-accessibility
- Ownership
- Management entity
- Endowment
- Degree of protection
- Any “friends” group affiliations (volunteer groups who have an interest in the site)
- List of people and/or government departments to contact for further information or to report a problem (this list is especially important for land that has overlapping jurisdictions, such as Arlington’s Great Meadows in Lexington, and for land owned by an agency not headquartered in Town, such as MDC-owned land along the Mystic Lakes or Alewife Brook).
- Important rules for use of the site. For example, there are rules for rights of way on the bikeway.
- Hours listed for when the bikeway is open

Each open space management plan would provide the above base information as a service to the general public as well as a repository of information on the site.

Capital Improvements Information

Each site should be evaluated for any changes recommended as part of the overall open space management plan. The Town can describe the site’s “turn” for upgrading in the cycle of long-term maintenance in collaboration with the Capital Planning Committee.

Management Guidelines

Management guidelines could include:

- Best environmentally sensitive management practices such as the use of non-chemical pesticide control.
- Maintenance timetable. For example, periods of “rest” for playing fields when no active use can occur.
- Special provisions for upkeep and improvement of the landscaping. For example, in the historic Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden, a landscaping plan that not only provides for routine maintenance such as weeding and trimming, but also includes guidelines for replacement plantings, limits on replanting and/or alterations, and expert advice needed.
- Plans for major changes to a park, such as landscape and master plans at Robbins Farm and Spy Pond parks.
- Evaluation for capital improvements.

Uses of Site Management Plan

The purpose of the individual site management plans is to think through ways to improve a site’s management and to bring ideas for improved management to the site’s decision-makers. The management plan is a vehicle for improving the operations and appearance of our parks and open spaces. The management plan will also bring attention to needs that are often long-standing and allow the Town to respond to needs in an organized and systematic way.

The site management plan will be a tool for lobbying Town resources and outside funds. In cases where the Town could acquire land through negotiation (such as the Mugar property), a management plan could show the current land owners how the Town would use the parcel, which may be especially important for land that would carry use restrictions on it. Some land could be leased or might have easements given to the general public to provide access to other open space. Or, some land might be used only for special events with the owner’s permission.

Section 8

Goals and Objectives

8 - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Open Space Committee decided to accept and reinforce its commitment to the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan by using the Vision 2020 goal statements on environmental and culture and recreational concerns, cited in Section 6, to serve as the community goals for this 2002 Plan as well. The Committee believes these two Vision 2020 goals, which Town Meeting has adopted and which Town decision-making bodies must consider in their policy making, best represent the entire Arlington community and its commitment to open space and recreation issues.

A. Goals for 2002-2007

The following four goals guide the 2002 Plan and are based on a review of the Town's accomplishments in meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the 1996 Plan. These new goals build on and go beyond the previous set of goals to provide a continuing mandate for the Town to pursue a coordinated and focused plan for acquiring and managing open space and outdoor recreation facilities, working collaboratively within the Town and throughout the region to ensure continued protection of our fragile environment, and enhancing public awareness, accessibility and stewardship of the existing open space resources in Arlington. The fulfillment of these goals will make Arlington a more desirable and pleasant community to live in and to visit. Further, by accomplishing the specific actions associated with these goals, the entire community will acquire a greater sense of awareness of and appreciation for the Arlington's valuable open space and recreational resources.

1. Acquire undeveloped lands for permanent protection as open space in neighborhoods throughout Town.
2. Preserve, protect and enhance existing open spaces, including watersheds and natural areas; parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreational facilities; and historic sites and cultural landscapes.
3. Coordinate and strengthen local and regional planning and management of open spaces in conjunction with various Town departments, commissions and volunteer groups, and work closely with nearby towns and regional entities and with state and federal officials and agencies.
4. Increase public awareness, accessibility and community stewardship of the Town's open spaces.

B. Goals and Objectives

The following list presents Arlington's four open space goals with their more specific objectives. The detailed actions to achieve these goals and objectives are listed in Section 9, Five-Year Action Plan.

1. Acquire undeveloped lands for permanent protection as open space in neighborhoods throughout the Town.

2. Preserve, protect and enhance existing open spaces, including watersheds and natural areas; parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreational facilities; and historic sites and cultural landscapes.

2-a. Preserve and protect the Town's natural heritage, including watersheds, water bodies, native flora and fauna, and all existing natural areas.

2-b. Preserve, protect and enhance Arlington's parks, playgrounds, playing fields and other outdoor recreation spaces.

2-c. Preserve, protect and enhance Arlington's historic open space sites and cultural landscapes.

3. Coordinate and strengthen local and regional planning and management of open spaces in conjunction with various Town departments, commissions and volunteer groups, and work closely with nearby towns and regional entities and with state and federal officials and agencies.

3-a. Work within the Town of Arlington to better coordinate and manage open space goals and objectives.

3-b. Work at the regional level to coordinate planning and development initiatives that protect and enhance open space across jurisdictions.

3-c. Engage state officials and state and federal agencies in efforts by the Town to acquire, maintain and manage open space and outdoor recreation resources.

4. Increase public awareness, accessibility and community stewardship of the Town's open spaces.

4-a. Develop a stewardship program for major open spaces and key neighborhood parks.

4-b. Increase public awareness and educate Town residents about open space and recreational resources.

4-c. Provide greater use of and improved access to key water bodies, natural areas and recreational facilities.

Section 9

Five-Year Action Plan

9 - FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

This Five-Year Action Plan presents specific priorities and a detailed list of actions to meet Arlington's open space and recreation goals and objectives during 2002-2007.

A. Top Six Open Space and Recreation Priorities

The six priorities listed below are specific, timely and attainable objectives that are embedded in the overall set of goals and objectives presented in the Five-Year Action Plan. They hold equal importance and represent the overwhelming level of concern shared by Town residents for acquiring, maintaining, raising funds for, and working collaboratively to preserve, protect and enhance open space resources and recreational facilities in our densely developed Town.

1. Land Acquisition

Actively pursue initiatives already in place for the Town to acquire the Mugar and Symmes parcels, which are currently threatened with development, and be prepared to acquire other land parcels, including wetlands, that may be lost as open space if the Town does not acquire them. Some potential sites are Elizabeth Island, Knowles Farm, and the undeveloped land adjacent to Poet's Corner (now owned by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston).

2. Management of Town Open Spaces

Encourage Town departments and Town and regional commissions and volunteer groups to work collaboratively to better coordinate and manage these open space goals and objectives. Special efforts should be undertaken to hire a natural resources professional to advocate for and oversee planning, management and fundraising for Arlington's open space resources.

3. Community Preservation Act

Research and pursue Town approval for use of the Community Preservation Act to raise funds for the acquisition of open spaces, in conjunction with affordable housing and historic preservation projects.

4. Capital Improvements and Maintenance

Research and pursue additional funding sources for capital improvement plans and maintenance programs for open spaces and recreational facilities, including both major projects (e.g., Reservoir dam and beach, Robbins Farm Park, Spy Pond Park, Menotomy Rocks Park and Reed's Brook) and ongoing needs such as replanting of street trees, grooming of playing fields, repairs and replacement of playground equipment, and cleanup of litter and damaged vegetation in conservation areas.

5. Public Participation and Stewardship

Increase public awareness, education, accessibility and community stewardship of the Town's open spaces through a variety of participatory education programs and volunteer activities to better monitor and improve open space and recreational facilities.

6. Conservation Restrictions

Work with the Arlington Land Trust and other groups or individuals to negotiate permanent conservation restrictions on undeveloped privately owned property that could be developed under current zoning regulations, in order to protect irreplaceable open spaces of all sizes in this already densely developed residential community.

B. Five-Year Action Plan

This Action Plan provides a detailed list of actions for meeting Arlington's open space and recreation goals and objectives during 2002-2007. Accomplishing all of these actions requires the involvement of many individuals within Town government, citizen volunteers and in some cases officials and experts from outside Arlington. Many actions also require a commitment of funds from the Town, from state or federal government grants, from local individuals and businesses, and from foundations or other private funding sources. Most of these actions are ongoing, so specific dates are not set for each separate item. Actions that can be assigned a specific time frame are so noted.

1. Acquire undeveloped lands for permanent protection as open space in neighborhoods throughout the Town.

- Actively pursue initiatives already in place in 2002 for the Town to acquire the Mugar and Symmes Hospital parcels for their existing open space value.
- Establish guidelines and be prepared to acquire other significant land parcels that may be lost as open space if the Town does not acquire them, such as Elizabeth Island, Knowles Farm and undeveloped land adjacent to Poet's Corner.
- Identify other undeveloped parcels and buildable lots of all sizes, especially those adjacent to existing open spaces, parks and waterways, such as along Mill Brook, Spy Pond, Mystic Lakes and the Marquis/Minuteman Bikeway.
- Conduct an inventory of small, undeveloped lots and larger residential or commercial lots that could be protected via conservation restrictions (CRs), in conjunction with Arlington Land Trust.
- Work with the Arlington Land Trust, other groups and landowners to negotiate permanent conservation restrictions on undeveloped privately owned property that could be developed under current zoning regulations, in order to protect sensitive and irreplaceable open spaces of all sizes and to enhance local neighborhoods.

2. Preserve, protect and enhance existing open spaces, including watersheds and natural areas; parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreational facilities; and historic sites and cultural landscapes.

2-a. Preserve and protect the Town's natural heritage, including watersheds, water bodies, native flora and fauna, and all existing natural areas.

- Develop stewardship and management plans for major water bodies and natural areas, with public and private support to preserve and protect habitats for flora and fauna (Arlington Reservoir, Great Meadows, Meadowbrook Park, Alewife Brook, Mystic River and Lakes, Spy Pond, Mill Brook).
- Pursue all efforts to ensure that Great Meadows (Arlington-owned land in Lexington) is permanently protected as natural open space.
- Implement existing plans to redevelop Reed's Brook for combined flood control, wetlands protection, land conservation and recreational uses.
- Monitor Reservoir dam repairs as required by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection through collaboration between Town's Department of Public Works, Vision 2020 Reservoir Committee, Conservation Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, and others to ensure that public safety needs are met while at the same time

preserving as many trees and other vegetation as possible and also re-landscaping any areas that must be cleared; ensure that sufficient funds are available for ongoing maintenance of natural and landscaped areas.

- Develop and implement a stewardship and maintenance plan for Meadowbrook Park and ensure that the boundary between the existing cemetery and the park is maintained.
- Continue to enforce the Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act and Wetlands Protection Act to prevent further culverting of Mill Brook and to enhance its open sections.
- Maintain the physical integrity of the existing linear park along Mill Brook from Brattle Street through Arlington Center, Meadowbrook Park, and into the Lower Mystic Lake; pursue opportunities to expand and enhance public access to Mill Brook where feasible.
- Enforce zoning and maintenance along the Marquis/Minuteman Bikeway linking Alewife Reservation in Cambridge to Arlington Reservoir in Arlington Heights and Great Meadows in Lexington.
- Continue to encourage use of native vegetation appropriate for an urban environment in Town-sponsored and private landscaping projects on commercial streets, as outlined in the Arlington Business Community (ABC) Study.
- Support the ongoing efforts of the Green Streets/Green Cities planting program to enhance neighborhood streetscapes through maintenance and plantings of native trees and shrubs.
- Increase Town-managed tree planting to a level of three new trees for every one removed on public streets, parks and playgrounds.

2-b. Preserve, protect and enhance Arlington's parks, playgrounds, playing fields and other outdoor recreation spaces.

- Continue to upgrade the physical condition of playing fields and other recreational facilities, in line with the Pine and Swallow report (1997)(See Appendix Q) and user needs.
- Ensure that the sandy beach and swimming area at the Reservoir are preserved and enhanced through ongoing repairs to the earthen berm, in conjunction with work on the dam.
- Implement infrastructure plans for major parks and conservation areas, such as steps and trails at Windows on the Mystic, new landscaping and recreational facilities for Robbins Farm Park, baseball and soccer fields and nature trails at Reed's Brook, and improvements to the Spy Pond Park playgrounds and the shoreline of Spy Pond.
- Support public/private partnerships and other funding initiatives necessary to meet excessive demands on playing fields, especially those used for baseball and soccer throughout the Town.
- Study the possible expansion of recreation facilities on undeveloped land adjacent to Poet's Corner.
- Introduce educational signage and other amenities at selected parks (such as water fountains, benches, bulletin boards, composting toilets, first aid stations, telephones).
- Encourage the Park and Recreation Commission and Recreation Department to enhance facilities for tennis and basketball, as well as baseball, soccer, football, lacrosse and hockey.

2-c. Preserve, protect and enhance Arlington's historic open space sites and cultural landscapes.

- Identify significant sites in conjunction with the Arlington Land Trust, Historic Commission and other groups, and work with current owners to consider conservation and historic preservation restrictions or other actions to properly maintain those properties.

- Continue to monitor Knowles Farm, which features an 1840-era farmhouse and was the Town's last working farm.
- Continue to upgrade and expand interpretive programs, signage and other materials that integrate the historical, environmental, geographical and ecological resources of the Town and region.
- Develop new interpretive programs encompassing Arlington Great Meadows, Arlington Reservoir, Mill Brook, the former mill ponds, Spy Pond, and the entire Alewife/Mystic Watershed.
- Implement planned phases of restoration and maintenance of the Civic Block Master Plan, Whittemore-Robbins House and gardens, and the areas around Town Hall and Robbins Library.

3. Coordinate and strengthen local and regional planning and management of open spaces in conjunction with various Town departments, commissions and volunteer groups, and work closely with nearby towns and regional entities and with state and federal officials and agencies.

3-a. Work within the Town of Arlington to better coordinate and manage open space goals and objectives.

- Maintain and strengthen the Open Space Committee to oversee the Open Space Plan and to advocate actively for its goals, objectives and priorities.
- Continue to work with the Board of Selectmen, Zoning Board, Redevelopment Board, Conservation Commission, Park and Recreation Commission and other Town bodies to clarify and enforce Town policies on proper uses of public open spaces and treatment of those who violate zoning regulations.
- Explore the feasibility and advantage of hiring a natural resources professional to oversee the planning, management, funding and maintenance of Arlington's significant open space parcels, not including recreational fields and playgrounds.
- Develop and implement comprehensive ecological management plans for major open space and outdoor recreation sites under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works, Park and Recreation Commission, Recreation Department, Conservation Commission, Arlington Redevelopment Board, Board of Selectmen, or School Department.
- Continue to develop an overall open space and recreation Capital Improvements Plan outlining short-term and long-term fiscal needs to properly manage and maintain Town-owned open spaces using innovative fundraising mechanisms such as revolving funds, user fees, voluntary contributions on Town tax bills or the annual Town census.
- Expand communications and develop mechanisms to monitor potential real estate transactions that could impact Town goals to preserve and enhance open spaces, including very small lots
- Explore public/private partnerships to implement the goals and objectives of this Plan.

3-b. Work at the regional level to coordinate planning and development initiatives that protect and enhance open space across jurisdictions.

- Coordinate regional open space planning through increased collaboration with organizations

such as Mystic River Watershed Association, Alewife Coalition, Friends of Alewife Reservation and Metropolitan District Commission (MDC).

- Work more closely with nearby towns, especially in the Alewife Reservation region (with Belmont and Cambridge), in the Mystic Lakes/River region (with Medford and Winchester) and in the Great Meadows, Reservoir and Reed's Brook areas (with Lexington).
- Investigate the possibility of establishing a better connection between Arlington and Minuteman National Historic Park so the Town can fully avail itself of any potential assistance and guidance for regional planning and public education objectives.

3-c. Engage state officials and state and federal agencies in Town efforts to acquire, maintain and manage open space and recreation resources.

- Continue to work with state legislators to support and promote state policies that favor protection of and funding for open space.
- Research and pursue options to use the Community Preservation Act to raise funds for acquisition of open spaces, conservation of current open spaces, development of affordable housing and historic preservation projects on or adjacent to existing open spaces, including parks and playgrounds.
- Develop long-range plans for restoration, management and maintenance of parks and playgrounds, including fundraising for state and federal grants to supplement Town resources, such as Urban Self Help and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

4. Increase public awareness, accessibility and community stewardship of the Town's open spaces.

4-a. Develop a stewardship program for major open spaces and key neighborhood parks.

- Establish a coordinated townwide stewardship program involving special-interest Friends groups and other neighborhood groups concerned about specific areas.
- Continue to support existing volunteer Friends groups that have organized around neighborhood parks and playgrounds.

4-b. Increase public awareness and educate Town residents about open space and recreational resources.

- Develop and coordinate a uniform signage system and graphic logo to guide and inform residents and visitors at all major open space sites.
- Encourage residents to participate actively in various Town committees and citizen groups to remain aware of possible property sales, development plans, and opportunities for open space advocacy.
- Expand regular nature walks and environmental education programs for all ages (birding, canoeing/kayaking, and cleanup campaigns).
- Work with local youth groups, churches, schools and other volunteers to promote awareness about the Town's open spaces and participation in open space and recreational activities.
- Begin to educate landowners of small and large lots about the tax benefits of conservation restrictions for themselves and other benefits for the community at large.
- Encourage the creation of more community gardens, especially for children's programs
- Sponsor annual Town Day booths for information sharing, education, and advocacy about

open space and conservation issues.

- Work with Sustainable Arlington to link Town concerns about open space with larger global concerns about air quality, energy efficiency, climate protection, and sustainability issues in general.
- Encourage public transportation, walking and bicycle commuting as alternatives to automobile use.
- Continue to use the local and regional media to promote and inform residents about open space and recreational activities and special events.

4-c. Provide greater use of and improved access to key water bodies, natural areas and recreational facilities.

- Review accessibility concerns at all Town open space, recreational and historic sites and incorporate improvements into their management plans.
- Formalize and publicize the Town policy of creating accessibility for people with disabilities at every redeveloped or improved site, such as the ramp into the swimming area at Reservoir Beach, Whittemore-Robbins House and gardens, and other sites.
- Investigate opportunities for increased handicapped parking and access for all residents at key open space sites, such as Reservoir Beach, Mystic Lakes, Spy Pond, Marquis/Minuteman Bikeway, and playing fields.
- Investigate ways to improve public access to pathways along Alewife Brook, Lower Mystic Lake and the Mystic Valley Parkway and around Spy Pond.
- Collaborate with Lexington to design appropriate walking trails to and through Great Meadows, keeping natural areas separate and protected from active recreational uses, and link those trails to Arlington Reservoir and the Marquis/Minuteman Bikeway.

Section 10

Public Comments



Jonathan Jalbert, Supt. Of Recreation
Donna Sullivan, Recreation Supervisor
Robert McKeown, Facilities Supervisor

TOWN OF ARLINGTON RECREATION DEPARTMENT
& ARLINGTON SPORTS CENTER
422 SUMMER STREET
ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02474

TEL. (781) 316-3880
FAX. (781) 641-5495

www.town.arlington.ma.us/recnws

PLANNING & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

01 NOV 15 PM 3:18
PARK COMMISSIONERS

Joseph Carabello
Bernice Jones
Leslie Mayer
Mark McCabe
Donald Vitters

November 12, 2001

Alan McClennen, Jr.
Director
Department of Planning and Community Development
Town Hall
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02174

re: Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, 2001-2006

Dear Alan:

The Park and Recreation Commission would like to express its support of the Town of Arlington's Open Space and Recreation plan Update, 2001-2006. The Park and Recreation Commission was kept apprised of the progress of the plan through member Bernice Jones, who also served on the Open Space Committee. The Board voted at its meeting of April 9, 1996 and again on November 13, 2001 to support the plan.

The Commission is particularly concerned about the shortage of playing field space and the need for improved maintenance of existing sites. The Commission is also interested in, where possible, acquisition of land to be used for playing fields due to the great demand by organized sports teams for play space. These issues are extremely important for maintaining the health of the Recreation Department Programs.

We feel that the Open Space Plan and the Update 2001-2006 adequately reflects these needs, and look forward to making the plan a reality.

Sincerely,

Don Vitters, Chairman
Arlington Parks and Recreation Commission



Metropolitan Area Planning Council

60 Temple Place, Boston, Massachusetts 02111 617-451-2770 fax 617-482-7185 www.mapc.org

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PLANNING
DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY
01 OCT -5 AM 10:09

October 4, 2001

Alan McClennen Jr.
Director, Planning and Community Development
Town Hall
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Alan:

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council has reviewed the Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, 2001-2006. The plan is very thorough and well-written and covers local as well as regional concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this plan.

Sincerely,

David C. Soule
Executive Director

Cc: Joel Lerner, Division of Conservation Services



ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

TOWN HALL ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476

TELEPHONE 781-316-3090

October 11, 2001

Alan McClennen, Jr.
Director, Planning and Community Development
Town of Arlington
730 Massachusetts Ave.
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Alan:

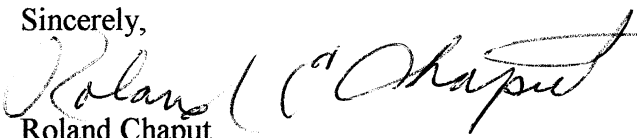
It is with enthusiasm that the Arlington Redevelopment Board gives its full endorsement to the updated Open Space Report, recognizing objectives and goals of the previous report and extending them into the 2002-2006 period. The updated report recognizes the progress made, clarifies and addresses needs for the long- and short-term future needs of the community, and sets reasonable priorities for the town and community groups to focus upon.

We feel that this report is a significant directive for the community and so we have voted on June 4, 2001, unanimously, to adopt the *Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, 2001-2006*, making it a consideration of the Board in its review processes. We view this as strong encouragement of implementation of the plan's elements.

Many people are attracted to Arlington for its convenient location and support of its residential character; but integral to that character is maintenance of its open space and "green" amenities. The extended open space plan addresses this issue, and recognizes it as the vital element it is for the future planning of the town.

Thank you for the opportunity to document our support.

Sincerely,


Roland Chaput
Chairman



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

MASSACHUSETTS

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

October 24, 2001

Alan McClennen, Jr., FAICP, Director
Department of Planning and Community Development
Town Hall
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

RE: Open Space Plan, 2001-2006

Dear Alan:

The Conservation Commission is writing to express its strong support of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, 2001-2006. David White of the Conservation Commission has been working extensively on this update as the Commission's representative to the Open Space Committee. David has kept the Conservation Commission apprised of the Update's development.

The Conservation Commission voted, unanimously, at its October 18, 2001 meeting to support the plan.¹

The Commission looks forward to actively working with the Open Space Committee and you and your staff to implement the goals of the Update. We are encouraged by this past spring's Town Meeting support of the Update.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel Stevens
Chair

¹ With the exception of the goal to acquire the Mugar parcel (due to pending litigation over a permit decision the Commission made concerning the Mugar parcel).

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CHARLES LYONS
CHAIR
DIANE M. MAHON
VICE-CHAIR
KEVIN F. GREELEY
KATHLEEN KIELY DIAS
JOHN W. HURD



01 SEP 25 PM 3:06

730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
TELEPHONE
781-316-3020
781-316-3029 FAX

TOWN OF ARLINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS 02476-4908

September 17, 2001

Alan McClennen, Jr.
Director of Planning and
Community Development
Town of Arlington
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Mr. McClennen:

The Board of Selectmen would like to offer its enthusiastic support for the "Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006." We would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the members of the Open Space Committee since the adoption of the Town's first open space plan in 1996. Their continued dedication has brought respect and attention to open space matters in the Town. The Board would like to especially thank member Ann LeRoyer for her hard work and contribution to the updated plan.

It is exciting that many of the goals adopted in the Town's first open space plan have been seen to fruition. We look forward to a continued relationship of working to improve our open space system, our natural areas and parks and playgrounds. We believe that a commitment to the improvement of our open spaces will keep Arlington an attractive town with a high quality of life for its residents.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Lyons".

Charles Lyons
Chairman



CORINNE M. RAINVILLE
TOWN CLERK

OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK
TOWN OF ARLINGTON
730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
ARLINGTON, MA 02476

TOWN HALL
OFFICE HOURS
9 A.M. TO 5 P.M.
MONDAY THRU FRIDAY
SUMMER HRS. - 8 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

TELEPHONE
(781) 316-3070

ARTICLE 23

OPEN SPACE PLAN

VOTED: (UNANIMOUSLY)

(QUORUM PRESENT)

That the goals and objectives of the 2001 Update to the Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan be endorsed and adopted.

A true copy of the vote under
Article 23 of the Warrant for
the Annual Town Meeting of the
Town of Arlington at the session
held May 7, 2001.

ATTEST:

Corinne M. Rainville

Town Clerk

Section 11

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<http://www.townonline.com/arlington>

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Birds in Arlington —<http://mrines.com/Birds/Arlington/Arlspecies.htm>
<http://mrines.com/Birds/Arlington/ArlLocationsmaps.htm>

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History of Winchester — *Pehistory* — <http://www.winchestermass.org/sachemp3.html>

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